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THE LIFE & WORK OF BIRKET FOSTER

BY

MARCUS HUISH

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BIRKET FOSTER

HIS LIFE AND WORK

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THE ART JOURNAL.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS.

ORIGINAL ETCHING BY BIRKET FOSTER

ARTIST PROOFS

OF

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*Early application should be made for these, as the Artist's Proofs of "*AN OLD ENGLISH MILL,*" by* BIRKET FOSTER, *were all sold very shortly after publication, and are now only to be had at three or four times their original value.*

THE ART ANNUAL

BIRKET FOSTER

HIS LIFE AND WORK

BY

MARCUS B. HUISH, LL.B.

EDITOR OF "THE ART JOURNAL"

With Numerous Illustrations

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BIRKET FOSTER.

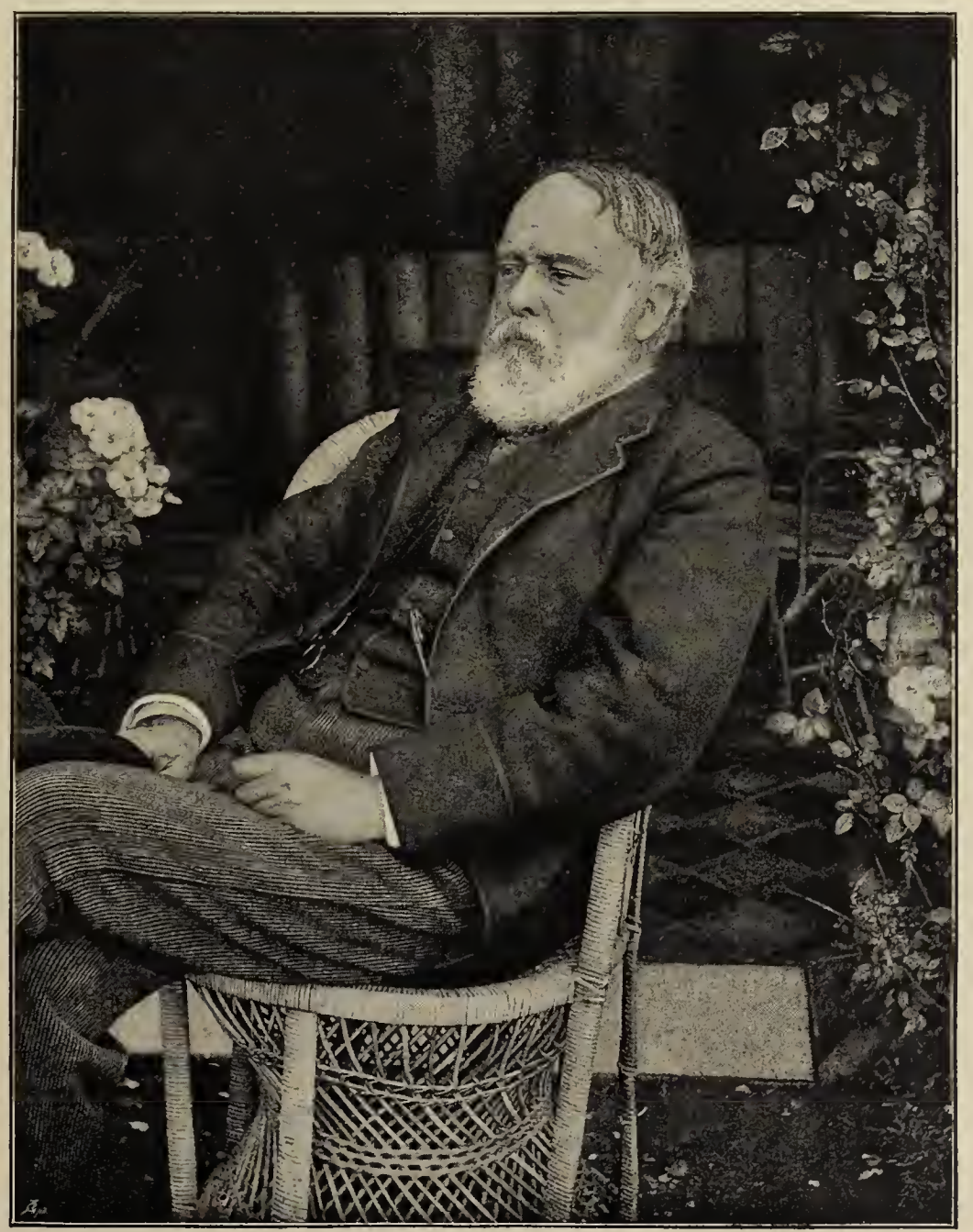
PART I.—HIS BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

FOR the first time since this series of Christmas Numbers of the *Art Journal* commenced we have selected for our subject an English artist from outside the ranks of the members of the Royal Academy. The choice during the earlier issues naturally admitted of no doubt; certain names presented themselves as claiming of right the foremost places in the list; later on, the task of affording variety led to the introduction of two notable foreigners, and the same motive this year induces us to present to our readers a memoir of that distinguished artist in the mediums of water colour and black and white, Mr. Birket Foster, Member of the Society of Painters in Water Colours.

If the sentiments which influence elections at the Royal Academy were more elastic, if distinction in Art was the only passport necessary to admission within its portals, if a world-wide recognition of talents constituted a claim, then assuredly the subject of this biography would have found a place amongst the self-elected immortals of that institution at least a quarter of a century ago. Had one of the now fashionable plebiscites been held amongst Englishmen all the world over, during any year of that period, the name of Birket Foster would have been found very near the head of the list of artists; for not only to the present but to the past generation his name has been for years a household word, and no living artist can be cited who has afforded greater pleasure to a larger *clientèle*, or who has done more to educate the masses to a love of all that is healthy and all that is beautiful in that phase of Art which appeals to his countrymen more than any other, namely, English landscape.

Mr. Foster has not, like so many of his profession, sprung from the ranks. He is a member of an old Quaker family which has for many generations held an honourable position in the north country. It may not be without interest to those of the name to have some particulars of the branch from which he claims descent, and I therefore cull from a volume, "The Pedigree of the Fosters of Cold Hesledon, in the County Palatine of Durham," the following ancestral tree:—

Robert Foster of Cold Hesledon.
|
Thomas Foster b. at Hawthorne, 1662.
|
Robert Foster b. at Hawthorne, 1694.
|
Dodshon Foster b. at Hawthorne, 1730.
|
Robert Foster b. at Lancaster, 1754.
|
Myles Birket Foster b. at Hebblethwaite Hall, 1785.
|
Myles Birket Foster b. at North Shields, 4th February, 1825.



Birket Foster, R.W.S.

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Robert Foster, the artist's grandfather, was, we gather from this work, a naval officer of repute, who was engaged during the last century in several desperate actions against the privateers, and was altogether a source of much distress and discomfort to his relations on account of his deserting those principles of which his sect were the marked exponents. We read that being appointed a store-keeper at Bermuda, where was carried on a branch of his father's mercantile business, "he was moved by the spirit (not the peaceable one of a Quaker but the true spirit of an Englishman) to make up his accounts, quit his store, collect together a few sailors, lay aside the Quaker, mount a cockade, and join a Lieutenant Tinsley, then fitting out a small armed vessel against the Americans. Coming in her to Portsmouth, after several severe actions he got himself recommended to Captain Reynolds as an officer likely to show him some business; was with him in the *Jupiter*, of 50 guns, when they went alongside a French frigate of 64 guns; was, in a desperate action which ensued, sent for by the captain, the master being killed, and appointed master in his place, and managing the ship for the remainder of the action, was appointed Lieutenant of the *Pelican*."

He was a friend of Wordsworth and Southey, and the latter wrote thus of him in 1806:—

"Wordsworth sent me a man the other day who was worth seeing; he looked like a first assassin in *Macbeth* as to his costume; but he was a rare man. He had been a lieutenant in the navy, and was scholar enough to quote Virgil aptly. He had seen much and thought much; his head was well stored and his heart in the right place."

The late Professor Sedgwick, in a privately printed volume of recollections, recounts an interview which this Robert Foster, curiously enough, brought about for him with the first great English illustrator in wood engraving, Thomas Bewick, at Newcastle, in 1821.

The Distribution of Coals. Drawing by Birket Foster for the Illustrated London News.

MYLES BIRKET FOSTER,* or Birket Foster, as he is universally known, was, as our pedigree shows, born at North Shields on the 4th of February, 1825, his mother being Ann, only daughter of Joseph and Mary King, of Newcastle-on-Tyne. He was the youngest but one of seven children, six of them being boys. His father removed to London when his son Birket was five years old, and it was there and in its neighbourhood that his education was completed.

There is a tradition in the Foster family that young Birket could draw before he could speak, and that the local renown of Bewick, who was alive when Birket was born (Bewick died in 1828), and who was then at the zenith of his fame, influenced in no small degree the budding aspirations of a young artist who was destined, at a future day, to popularize and carry forward to fuller perfection the art which the Newcastle school first made familiar in England.

Mr. Birket Foster himself is more diffident upon the subject of his earliest efforts and infantile genius. He considers that he was fortunate from the very outset in his surroundings and influences, and that these had much to do with whatever proficiency he attained to. At the first school he attended, kept by two ladies at Tottenham, he found in them skilful and sympathetic teachers, whilst instruction of a useful kind was later on continued at a school for children of the Society of Friends at Hitchin, in Hertfordshire. Here he

* Myles Birket has been a constantly recurring name in the family for a century past, being derived from a marriage contracted by Dodshon Foster in 1753 with Elizabeth Myles Birket.

stayed until 1840, the rudiments of his teaching including lessons in pencil drawing by an intelligent master named Charles Parry.

In those times education for the most part terminated when a lad had attained to the age of sixteen, and this was the case with young Foster. The weighty question of a profession had then to be decided upon. His inclinations were all for that of Art, and especially that branch of it which had to do with landscape. But there was at the time little promise in such a choice; no magnificent houses in the northern and western suburbs testified to the business being a lucrative one. Tiny chambers in Canonbury, Camden Town, or the Gravel Pits, Kensington, served as the studios even of Royal Academicians; decorative accessories of little or no worth as artistic properties seldom, if ever, cumbered their floors, and the simplicity of their surroundings was reflected in their lives.

The Gleaners at the Stile. From "Pictures of English Landscape."

The Foster family were intimate with several artists of note, and it was common talk how badly they fared and how precarious was their income.

But the youth was obdurate, and therefore nothing remained but to seek for a branch of Art from which a living was a possible, if not probable, result. The selection fell upon that of a die engraver, fobs being still in fashion, and seals and sealing wax in much probable request, owing to the introduction of the penny postage, whose jubilee we are this year celebrating. Mr. Foster, senior, had some acquaintance with a Mr. Stone, of Margaret Street, whose premises are those now occupied by Wyon, the seal engraver, and it was pro-

bably this acquaintance which turned the scale in the boy's favour. Stone was seen and everything was quickly arranged.

Boys in Pursuit of their Clothes. From "The Boy's Spring and Summer Book."

But fate decided that Birket Foster should not pass his life in the service of such a monotonous mistress, for upon the day on which the articles of apprenticeship were to be signed Mr. Stone unfortunately committed suicide, and this naturally also put an end to the projected pupildom.

We do not know how much the numismatic art of the country has lost by the diversion of young Foster's energies to other channels, but we do know what other branches have gained, and we cannot be sorry for the accident which deprived a profession which very much needed it of so much talent, inventiveness, and energy.

A fresh start had to be again made, and naturally enough, with the father's stringent provisions as to the probabilities of success being fair ones, the choice was much narrowed. But the good fortune which has attended Birket Foster throughout life again assisted him. Ebenezer Landells, who then stood very high in his profession of a wood-engraver, was included amongst the artistic friends of the family, probably through his having been a pupil of Bewick's, and north-country born. To him Mr. Foster, senior, went for advice, and this advice resulted in an offer to take the boy into the Landells business, not as an apprentice but to try his hand at the work and see whether it suited him, an offer which was cordially accepted.

As the career of the subject of our memoir was for the next twenty years of his life intimately connected with the art of wood-engraving, a short digression may here be pardoned by the reader whilst a glance is given at the position which that pursuit then occupied and its fortunes during that period.

Book illustration in England, as most of us are aware, is of comparatively recent growth. So far as imaginative compositions are concerned it does not date beyond the close of the last century, when Bewick and Stothard gave an impetus to wood engraving which with ebbs and flows has lasted up to the present time. Occasioned as many of these have been by the caprices of fashion, the flood which carried on to fortune the artist with whom we are most immediately concerned had no fortuitous commencement, but was entirely brought about by his being far-seeing enough to gauge the popular requirements and at once go out to meet them. In this respect he followed in the footsteps of the great wood-engraver, the founder of the Newcastle School, to which, as I have mentioned, Birket Foster has with some reason been affiliated. In Bewick's as in Foster's case the designer by his illustrations made the work which he illustrated a success, and Bewick in Gay's Fables, and Foster in his Tupper, or Pollok, could with truth quote the well-known lines in the Dunciad:

> "The pictures for the page atone,
> And Quarles is saved by beauties not his own."

The traditions established by Bewick were carried on by Clennell, Harvey, and others, who transferred the school, about 1820, to London; but for the next quarter of a century the lustre of wood-engraving was eclipsed by the popularity of the "Annuals" which depended upon steel engraving for their illustrations, and of that obtained the best which Great Britain has ever produced. In this respect their promoters were fortunate in obtaining the co-operation of Turner and Stanfield, the former of whom produced some of his finest work for "Annual Tours." The fashion was of course overdone, much money that had been gained at first was lost later on, and everybody was heartily tired of the name and sight of them at the date when Birket Foster entered upon his apprenticeship.

"Delightful is this loneliness; it calms
My heart: pleasant the cool beneath these elms,
That throw across the stream a moveless shade."
From James Graham's "Sabbath."

Going to Market. From a Water-Colour by Birket Foster.

It is one of the most emphatic testimonials to his work that within a space of ten years he was able to revive their popularity.

The wood-engravers were at this time principally occupied with the *Penny Magazine* and the numerous publications of Charles Knight. But the value of these from an artistic point of view was very low, and if any further proof is required of the then state of the art it may be found in the earlier numbers of *Punch* or of the *Illustrated London News*. As these were both started almost contemporaneously with Birket Foster's commencing work, and as he was engaged upon both of them, some of his recollections respecting them may be of interest here.

"Where the deer rustle through the twining brake."
From Thomson's "Seasons."

Punch, if not born in Landells' workshop, was for some time entirely produced there, so far as the illustrations were concerned. Foster well remembers the day when Landells came into the engravers' room, and said, "Well, boys, we've fixed on the title, we're going to call it *Punch*," an appellation which when he had left was unanimously voted a very stupid one.* At first the success of the venture was very doubtful, which will not be considered surprising by any one who glances over the earlier numbers, and it was not until the Almanack was published that it obtained any hold upon the affections of the public. In the number of September 5th, 1841, Birket Foster's work first appears, and thenceforward for some time all the small initials were either his or Mr. H. G. Hine's, now the veteran Vice-President of the Institute of Painters in Water Colours. Birket Foster's illustrations for the most part had nothing comic about them, and the initials were formed by tree trunks, or fishes, contorted into proper shape, evidently suggested by William Harvey's work. We have, however, a foretaste of his later productions in a cornfield with waggons and a setting sun. Hine on his side attempted comicalities, and one which appeared in December, 1841, entitled 'A Sound Nap,' a man so fast asleep that a spider has spun a web between his nose and a brandy-bottle, elicited great approbation from Mark Lemon and Henry Mayhew, when young Foster took it to Drury Lane Theatre, where the former was engaged in writing a farce. It was in this same month of December, that Birket Foster, then not eighteen years of age, was entrusted with the preparation of the principal cartoon. It will be found as "Punch's Pencillings," No. 22, and is entitled "Jack (Lord John Russell) cutting his name on the beam." It is a caricature of Cruikshanks' well-known drawing in Harrison Ainsworth's novel, "Jack Sheppard," which had recently been published.

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."
From Gray's "Elegy."

The *Illustrated London News* appeared in the following year and was suggested by the large sale obtained by the *Weekly Chronicle*, a ghastly production whose contents illustrated all the horrors of the day. Herbert Ingram, a printer and newsagent, had made £1,000 by selling Parr's Life Pills, and had started *Old Moore's Almanack* to advertise them. For the printing and illustrations of this and other pamphlets connected with it, he had called in the services of Henry Vizetelly, who in his turn had commissioned the present Sir John Gilbert to illustrate it with various imaginary scenes in the life of old Parr. After many lengthy confabulations, for the most part held at the Cock Tavern, in Fleet Street, the paper was started on the 14th of May, 1842. The illustrations were at first never drawn from nature, but were concocted from any other available source; for instance, that of the great fire at Hamburg, in the first number, was actually an old block of the city altered. Later on, as the paper succeeded, more money was spent upon the illustrations, and Birket Foster was often sent into the country to depict events which were happening. When the Queen, in 1845, went to Germany, Landells was sent as a special artist to illustrate

* The name came about from a pun upon Mark Lemon, the first editor's name, some one having suggested that "Punch must be good with so much lemon."

her progress, and his sketches as they arrived in this country were drawn on the block by Foster. One of Birket Foster's original drawings for the *Illustrated London News* is in the collection of Mr. Edmund Evans, and is reproduced at page 2.

But the major part of his original work for this paper was upon its *Annual Almanack.* Here his pencil will be recognised for many years, even during the period when he was fully occupied with book illustration.

The period at which Birket Foster entered upon his career is an interesting one for those of us who know the notabilities of the forties only by repute. If there were few giants in the artistic world, there were many in the literary, and with several of these, thanks to the requirements of the age which demanded that the letterpress should be interspersed with illustrations, Birket Foster was brought into connection. When he started at Landells, the house was busy engraving Cattermole's and Phiz's drawings for Dickens's "Old Curiosity Shop," and Foster had to take the results to Devonshire Place. Thackeray was a frequent visitor at the establishment, and angered young Foster and his fellow-student, Edmund Evans (of whom more hereafter), by never taking any notice of them when they opened the door to him, but pushing past, strode up-stairs. All the early contributors to *Punch* were constantly about the place, and of other literary celebrities, Captain Marryat and Anthony Trollope may be mentioned as having in one way or another come across Birket Foster's track.

The Stepping-Stones. From "Pictures of English Landscape."

THE first task to which Foster was set as an apprentice was the rudiments of wood-engraving, and his master at once told him he could not afford to let him spoil other people's drawings, so he must invent or copy designs for himself. Full of zeal for his new occupation, he soon had several ideas sketched upon blocks; Landells coming round shortly afterwards took them up, and at once exclaimed, "these are too good to spoil," and he took them away, directing the boy to make others. When these were presented to him, he said, "You mustn't engrave, you must draw on the wood; there are plenty of engravers, but very few draughtsmen. I will go and see your father; you will soon get on."

So once again the rulings of fate directed the boy's career, and he abandoned, almost before he had entered upon it, the profession of a wood-engraver.

The illustrative work upon which young Foster was first engaged was, singularly enough, in connection with the late editor of the *Art Journal*. Mr. S. C. Hall and his wife were preparing a book on "Ireland, its Scenery and Character" (How and Parsons), and for this Landells had to prepare a portion of the blocks. These were made from amateur sketches supplied by the author, and Foster was at sixteen deemed sufficiently competent to redraw and improve upon them. He was next employed to copy some of the drawings made by Stanfield for Marryat's "Poor Jack." These had already been placed on wood by another draughtsman, but they were not considered good enough. When the blocks were engraved, Foster was sent with them to Marryat's lodgings, which were next door to the Senior United Service Club, Pall Mall, where he had an interview with the Captain. For some time Foster's spare moments were utilised in running errands and taking blocks home. On one of these occasions, in the winter of 1841, whilst going to Miss Clint's, at Islington, with the block of the Maypole Inn in Barnaby Rudge, of which Miss Clint had to engrave the easier parts, he fell, and snapped several tendons of one of his legs, which made him have a personal and painful interest in poor Barnaby.

"O for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade."
From Cowper's "Task."

In those days the opportunities of studying Art were not much more extended than half a century earlier, when the only place where Turner could study any example of Art was in Doctor Monro's private collection. The National Gallery contained but a tithe of the pictures it now possesses, and for the greater part of the year no other exhibitions were open to the public. To obtain the friendship of a collector of pictures was, therefore, a great boon to a young artist, and Birket Foster was exceptionally fortunate even in this respect. For he had not long been at Landells before he was taken notice of by Jacob Bell, the chemist, the friend of Landseer and the donor of the fine collection by that artist to the National Gallery. Landells had recommended the boy to copy engravings, as that would teach him how to represent colour by line and tint, and Mr. Bell, who was a friend of his father, was only too ready to lend him for this purpose the Landseer proofs which were then being engraved after that artist's works. These by rising at an early hour he found time to copy. One day, presenting a pen-and-ink drawing, after one of these drawings, to Mr. Bell, he was so pleased with it that he would have it taken off at once for Landseer to see, who, he said, was at that moment dining with Calcott at Fladong's Hotel in Oxford Street. But the boy was shy and would not go, and he missed an interview which might have been of much assistance to him; however, the excellency of the copy was attested by his selling it elsewhere for the considerable sum of twenty guineas.

None but those who have experienced it can tell the delight which the unexpected possession of a goodly sum, the first result of one's pencil or brush, evokes. In Birket Foster's case it was a perfect God-send, for it enabled him to accomplish a great desire, namely, to see the Highlands during the holiday which the master had promised to his industrious apprentice. But the delightful anticipations with regard to the trip were not destined to be fulfilled. One day, after leaving Aberfeldy, the postillion took the pair-horse chaise containing young Foster too near the edge of a considerable declivity, with the result that the whole went over the side and our hero found himself imbedded beneath the chaise with an arm broken in two places. But though his pleasure came to an untimely end, he would not allow his education to suffer, and whilst his right arm was in splints he learnt to draw with his left. Unfortunately the ill effects of the accident were not confined to his arm, for shortly afterwards a lumbar abscess formed on his back, and this not only kept him a prisoner to his bed for the long period of seven months but nearly cost him his life, as during several days his condition was so grave that the eminent surgeon, Aston Key, told him to prepare for the worst. But youth and a good constitution were on his side and he left his sick-bed on his nineteenth birthday.

Mr. Foster is never tired of expressing his indebtedness to Landells for the education he gave him and the kindness he

BIRKET FOSTER PINXT

THE ART JOURNAL

J. COUSEN SCULP

showed him. Convinced that nature would be the youth's best mistress Landells sent him to her with these instructions: "Now that work is slack in these summer months spend them in the fields; take your colours and copy every detail of the scene as carefully as possible, especially trees and foreground plants, and come up to me once a month and show me what you have done." Nothing suited the student better, and he passed all his days in the fields at Hampstead or Highgate, and there he began an intimacy with nature which has never ceased. A splendid memory aided him so well that to this day he can draw with absolute fidelity a nettle, a burdock, or any of those essential foreground bits which, until then, with perhaps the exception of Turner, no one had thought it worth while to translate with accuracy. In the winter months he worked nearer home, but still from nature, frequently visiting the river wharves which, in the pre-embankment days, were full of material for the true artist.

The only work which appeared during his apprenticeship with his name attached to it as the illustrator, was a small volume of poems upon Richmond, which were compiled by C. Ellis, the brother of the landlord of the Star and Garter. For this he made three drawings from views in its neighbourhood. But there is many a book published at this period which owes its illustrations to him but which shows no signature or acknowledgment of authorship.

BIRKET FOSTER. PART II.—HIS WORK IN BLACK AND WHITE.

IT was in 1846 that Birket Foster parted company with Landells, and for the first time found himself left to his own resources. The term for which he had agreed to serve Landells was at an end, and there was now nothing for it but to go the round of the publishers and get work when and where he could. Youth and energy and a knowledge of his own capacities all combined to give him confidence; so, armed with half-a-dozen drawings which he had placed upon the wood (leaving it in its natural round condition as a sort of framework), he started in search of fortune. His first visit was to Sharpe, the proprietor of *Sharpe's Magazine*, which was at that time a good property. He kept a shop in Newgate Street. "We don't want any assistance," he at once said. "Prior does all our work, and we are quite satisfied with it." He next proceeded to Robert Branston's, who had a large printing and engraving establishment, and here again he met with no success, only politeness, an expression of congratulation upon his work, and the usual notification that he would not be forgotten if anything in his line was required. His third attempt was more fortunate, for Henry Vizetelly (who was then in a good business as a producer of books, undertaking the engraving and printing for other firms) directly he saw the drawings, said, "You're the very man I want, I have several books I can put into your hands at once, and if you will sell these blocks I will buy them." Our artist was at once commissioned to illustrate a book Thomas Miller had written for Chapman and Hall, entitled, "The Boy's Country Book." This was published in four parts, corresponding to the four seasons. A reproduction of one of the illustrations is given at page 4, which clearly shows that Birket Foster was under the influence of Bewick at this time, the introduction of the comic element, namely, the tow rope catching up the boys' clothes, being particularly Bewickian.

"His folded flock secure, the shepherd home
Hies, merry-hearted; and by turn relieves
The ruddy milkmaid of her brimming pail:
The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart,
Unknowing what the joy-mixed anguish means,
Sincerely loves, by that blest language shown
Of cordial glances, and obliging deeds."
Thomson's "Seasons."

The thorough education he had received stood him in such good stead that, from the outset, he acquitted himself so well that Vizetelly had no hesitation in recommending him to all his clients. The immediate result was a commission to illustrate Longfellow's "Evangeline." David Bogue had entrusted this to certain young pre-Raphaelites, but their work had staggered him. Neither he or any one else was as yet educated up to such revolutionary methods. He would have none of it, and when asked, "What shall you do with the drawings?" "This," he replied, and wetting one of the blocks he erased the drawing with the sleeve of his coat. Each was in like manner destroyed, although a considerable sum had been paid for them.

With his brother artists treated in this way it may well be imagined that Birket Foster entered upon the work with some

trepidation, and the publication of this his first important essay and its reception by the public was perhaps the most anxiously expected event of his life. But any fear as to the issue was soon ended. The *Athenæum* was at that date the literary and artistic paper which gave the cue to popular opinion, and its verdict would probably make or mar the artist's future career. Coming into Vizetelly's one morning Foster was greeted by him with, "Here's the *Athenæum*; by Jove, they have given it to you!" His heart may have been said to have sunk into his boots at this announcement, but when the notice was handed to him and he read it, he hardly knew whether he stood on his head or his heels, for this is what it said:—"A more lovely book than this has rarely been given to the public; Mr. Foster's designs, in particular, have a picturesque grace and elegance which recall the pleasure we experienced on our first examination of Mr. Rogers's 'Italy,' when it came before us illustrated by persons of no less refinement and invention than Stothard and Turner. Any one disposed to carp at our praise as overstrained is invited to consider the 'Boat on the Mississippi,' which, to our thinking, is a jewel of the first water."

From Cowper's "Task."

The criticism in the *Art Journal* for June 1850 was equally laudatory, and was accompanied by a block of 'Morning' which Mr. Foster had been commissioned to do, to illustrate a series of Illustrations from the Poets which was then running through the *Journal*.

"Evangeline" had an enormous sale, and not a moment was lost in advertising that the rest of Longfellow's would be similarly published. Birket Foster's joy was somewhat dashed at first by seeing the notice, which ran as follows: "In preparation. The Minor Poems of H. W. Longfellow. Printed uniform with 'Evangeline.' Profusely Illustrated." He was not yet accustomed to the latitude which publishers allow in their notices, but he soon ascertained that the illustrations were not "in preparation," but were to be placed in his hands.

The Leafless Avenue. From Cowper's "Task."

This second issue of Longfellow was as great a success as the first, and Bogue, who acted throughout with liberality, suggested that "Hyperion" must now be done, and that Vizetelly and young Foster had better follow the footsteps of Paul Flemming as far as the Austrian Tyrol, and so obtain that accuracy of local colouring which had not been aimed at in the earlier illustrations. The trip, the first of many subsequent ones abroad, was a great joy to our artist, and is sketched out at some length in an appendix which was written to the volume by Vizetelly. "Hyperion" was published at Christmas, 1852.

The route taken was up the Rhine, and Birket Foster utilised to make a series of drawings of that subject; these illustrations were engraved on steel by the best line engravers after the manner of the old annuals, Henry Mayhew being employed to write the letterpress. The work appeared in 1855 under the title of "The Rhine," and sold largely, whereupon a second volume, "The Upper Rhine," was projected, and in due course was compiled.

An agreeable commission was entrusted to Birket Foster about this time, namely, the illustration of Scott's Poems. These were all, with the exception of "Rokeby," which had never been popular, published during the years 1853—1855 by Messrs. Black, of Edinburgh. The artist undertook several visits to the scenes of the poems, as well as to Scotland and Wales for the purpose of illustrating various guide-books which the firm were then publishing. He considers that not only were the drawings then made as good as any that he at any time accomplished, but that the engraving and printing of the blocks left nothing to be desired. The first editions of the guide-books were also beautifully printed.

From this time forward the entirety of the illustrations for almost every book he was engaged upon were placed in his hands. He selected the subjects which he cared to illustrate himself and placed the remainder in the hands of various artists to whom he considered they were best fitted. Apropos of the publishers' eagerness and his popularity at this time, he tells some amusing experiences. The shelves were ransacked for subjects which could be illustrated, and even Blair's "Grave" and Young's "Night Thoughts" were suggested, the former being actually undertaken. Pollok's "Course of Time" could not be avoided, and Foster found himself at work upon renderings of subjects for which he was entirely unfitted, such, for instance, as "The Plains of Heaven" and "The Unfathomable Lake," the Fallen Angels in his drawing of the latter now reminding him of eels being thrown out of a

bag. He gained an intimate acquaintance with Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy," for taking it up the Rhine to read and select his subjects from, he lost the volume just as he had finished its perusal, and had upon his return to wade through the whole of it again.

In other cases, in conjunction with his life-long friend Edmund Evans, he drew the illustrations of works which took his fancy, and Evans engraved them; these they disposed of to various publishers, and thereby secured a better result both artistically and financially.

At this time the number of artists engaged upon book illustrations who have subsequently attained to eminence in the profession of Art was quite remarkable; no similar period bears any resemblance to it in this respect. Of painters we have Sir F. Leighton, Sir J. E. Millais, E. Burne Jones, Rossetti, Holman Hunt. Amongst water-colour painters Sir J. Gilbert, G. Dodgson, E. Duncan, and Hine. Whilst in workers of black and white the name of John Tenniel stands pre-eminent.

A perusal of the list of works illustrated by Birket Foster discloses the curious fact that three-fourths, at least, of them consist of poetry, and yet he never illustrated Tennyson, Shelley, or Keats, each of whose productions would have lent itself so happily to his pencil. As regards the two last-named, there is no apparent reason for the omission, but in the case of Tennyson matters fell out thus. Tennyson's publisher at this date, when Birket Foster was in full swing as an illustrator, was Moxon, and an arrangement had actually been made with him for the illustration of the whole of the poems, and

Pembroke Castle.

two blocks were drawn and cut, when differences arose, and Tennyson withdrew all his copyrights from the house. The two blocks which illustrated 'Break, Break,' and 'The Reapers,' were afterwards engraved on steel by William Miller, and were used in the volumes of Hood's poems.

Cawing Rooks. Cowper's "Task."

Mr. Foster's labours in book illustration practically came to an end in 1859, the volumes published at the end of that year naturally bearing the date of 1860. We have subsequently to this, in the year 1860, only a single volume, "The Scottish Reformation," the illustrations to which were made to oblige his friend the author, Dr. Lorimer. An interval of eleven years elapsed before any other new works appeared with Mr. Foster's name as illustrator. In 1871 and 1872 two volumes of Hood's Poems were published by Moxon; these each contained twenty-two vignettes engraved upon steel by the veteran, William Miller, of Edinburgh. The work was practically a labour of love for the old man, and whilst they were his last, they were little, if anything, removed from being his best work. He was close upon eighty when he undertook what he called "a work after my own heart." The task evidently recalled to him his work of forty years earlier, when he formed one of the band of engravers which immortalised Rogers by engraving for his poems Turner's illustrations. In the Hood illustrations the only defect is the shape of the vignettes, which in many instances leave much to be desired. Birket Foster, who is a past-master in the art, cannot have been answerable for this, and the fault must be laid at the door of the engraver, who carried the washes with too much hardness up to the edges. Amongst the most successful plates may be noted 'Autumn,' 'A Storm off Hastings,' 'Cologne,' 'The Rhine Dragon,' and 'Ghent.' These volumes, when they turn up with their repellently gaudy covers in second-hand booksellers' catalogues, are purchaseable at an absurdly low price.

In 1878, at the suggestion of Messrs. Maclure and Macdonald, Mr. Foster used their lithographic process for a series of thirty-five sketches which he had made in the previous summer during a tour in Brittany; they reproduce, touch for touch, his work at Vitré, Quimper, Morlaix, Dôl, Dinan, and St. Malo, and perpetuating as they do phases of peasant life and dress which are rapidly disappearing, will become in time a valuable record. The volume, which is of folio size, was published privately by the artist.

Another interval of ten years elapsed before his last illustrated work was offered to the public. In 1888 Messrs. Dowdeswell published a volume of reproductions, also by a lithographic process, of vignettes of the principal towns in England.

Before leaving the subject of Mr. Foster's work in black and white, mention must be made of that which he has executed with the needle. His earliest published etchings are the thirty made (evidently in imitation of the Etching Club productions) to illustrate Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," and published in 1855. Representing as they do the work of the artist, without the intermediary of the engraver, they are especially interesting. They are, besides, full of delicate beauties. I would call attention in this respect to etchings No 4, 7, and 11. The *Hamlet*, by Warton, was illustrated in a similar manner with fourteen etchings in 1859. A long interval separates these from his next work, which was, we believe, a plate of 'An Old English Mill' for this Journal, and which appeared in 1881. This was followed by an etching, published by Messrs. Tooth; another, called 'The Wandering Musician,' published by Messrs. Dowdeswell; and Walker's 'Cookham,' etched for Mr. Maclean. The frontispiece to this number completes the list, but Mr. Foster is at present at work upon a more important plate than any he has yet done, and which it is hoped will be completed this year.

The moods of the public in matters of Art are so fitful that it is no wonder they make the critic despair. We look down from our present eminence of Art culture upon the appreciation of our fathers with a pity approaching contempt. And yet they readily gave their guinea for the volumes illustrated by Birket Foster, and, not content, called out for more and more. We see them marked in the second-hand booksellers' catalogues at six, five, nay, even three shillings a piece, and pass them by, although in the majority of instances, independently of the illustrations, they are admirably printed editions of standard authors. When Art is so much a matter of fashion it is hopeless to forecast, and foolish to do so in print, but yet I have no hesitation in saying that the time cannot be far distant when the turn of the wheel will bring again a more accurate appreciation of these admirable specimens of true woodcutter's art, and that in their *first* editions, where alone the blocks are seen to their best advantage, they will be sought for and bought up at very different prices to those for which they are now offered.

"To Durham first their course they bear,
And in St. Cuthbert's ancient seat sing mass."
White Doe of Rylstone.

BIRKET FOSTER. PART III.—HIS WORK IN COLOUR.

THROUGHOUT the period during which his time had been fully occupied with drawing on wood for book illustration, Birket Foster had never for a moment abandoned his determination to become a painter either in oil or water colours. Although he had derived a world-wide fame through his present occupation, it naturally must have been a continual discouragement and annoyance to him to see his life's work disappear under the engraver's tool, and to feel that be it ever so meritorious it would pass without recognition from any corporate body of artists. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that Birket Foster had from the very outset occupied his spare moments with the practice of painting in oil and water colour. Of specimens of the first-named method but few of this date exist; he tells me that every spare coin was at one time spent on paints and canvas, and that the latter cumbered the ground in such numbers that the question arose what to do with them; the only solution that could be devised was to cut them from their stretchers, roll them up into bundles, and be rid of them somehow. He well remembers how he and Evans sneaked out one night, with almost guilty feelings as if they were surreptitiously disposing of the remains of a crime, and watching their opportunity, dropped them from Blackfriars Bridge into the Thames, where may-be some remnants are still preserved beneath the river mud.

I have not seen any of his very early water-colours, but if one can judge from reproductions which appear as a small

volume issued in the fifties, they were characterized by that minuteness of touch which has since been a principal feature of his work. A drawing of Arundel Park, painted about this time, in the possession of Mr. Edmund Evans, contains an amount of microscopic detail which must have been unparalleled at that time, save, perhaps, in some of John Lewis's works. Mr. Foster attributes this to his extraordinarily strong eyesight, which enabled him to see almost twice as much in nature as any one else, or as, perhaps, he ought to do. He cannot recall that at this time he studied or affected anybody's style, but it seems as if he was influenced by the pre-Raphaelite work which Millais, Rossetti, and others were doing at that time, and which made itself felt in the productions of almost every young artist of the day.

"Beneath these Rugged Elms."
From Gray's "Elegy."

THE school of landscape painting at the date when Birket Foster was most impressionable, in fact, throughout his student days, was not such as to inspire him with much veneration for it, or to create in him a desire to follow it. Turner, of course, there was, and of his gigantic achievements Birket Foster has always been a profound admirer, and has evidenced it by acquiring, as soon as his means permitted, several exceptionally beautiful specimens in water colour. But at the period to which we refer the best of Turner's life was over, and he was exhibiting flashes only of his genius, which to a youth would be almost beyond comprehension, and certainly of no use for purposes of instruction. Besides Turner, who was there practising landscape Art from whom he could derive anything? Certainly not Calcott, who had by then reverted to historical painting. From Collins, an imitator of nature in generalities rather than details, but who had attained considerable popularity with his 'Happy as a King' (exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1836), he may have unconsciously gathered something, especially in his charming method of dealing with rustic figures. So again from Creswick's work, who in 1842 had been premiated by the British Institution, and elected to the Royal Academy, and who would therefore be in vogue, he may have had some hints. His 'Pathway to the Village Church' in the National Gallery, in its wooded landscape, field path, church tower, and girl at stile, is thoroughly Fosterian. Besides these we have the ideal landscapists, Martin, Dancy, and Poole; David Roberts with his scenic scenes, Lewis to whom we have already referred, John Linnell and Muller, Harding and Prout, with neither of whose work Birket Foster has any sympathy; Copley Fielding, for whose distances Mr. Foster has much admiration, but not for his foregrounds, which he considers weak and mannered; Leitch, who was an echo of Stanfield, but with an individuality of his own as regards colour, and F. Tayler; but in none of his work can we recognise any derivation from or likeness to these.

Clarkson Stanfield perhaps influenced Birket Foster more than any one else. Himself an advocate of composition almost before anything else, and with an intuitive admiration for style, he perceived both these elements in this painter's pictures. His massive foregrounds, and the strength imparted to them by big objects, and the advantage which the delicate distances gained thereby, always affected him. The block of timber which Stanfield almost always considered a necessary property for his foreground, was no spindly stick, but looked as if it could be sawn through. This admission shows the derivation of those felled elm trunks which are so familiar an adjunct to our artist's foregrounds, and which are always felicitously selected as a playground for his children.

It must not be forgotten that about this time Ruskin was

Hoyle's Mouth. From Black's "Guide to Wales."

issuing the volumes of "Modern Painters," in which he preached again and again from the text of truth to nature. To judge from his work Birket Foster might certainly have heard and profited by these sermons, but so far as he can remember he

did not come across Ruskin's writings until a period in his life when his style was too formed for them to have had any perceptible influence upon it.

IT was in 1858 that Mr. Foster finally determined to give up book illustrating for water-colour painting. Many engagements still continued, but as these came to an end he accepted no new ones. He aspired not only to become a water-colour artist but one of the first in his profession, and he knew what a powerful assistance to this end membership of the Society of Painters in Water Colours would be. He therefore spent the summer of 1858 in the country, in the neighbourhood of Dorking, working by himself, and painting very carefully everything he saw, which, as we have seen, was in many instances too much, and he quickly found himself unconsciously putting far too much substance and far too little mystery into his work. However, the result was a number of drawings, from which three were selected as those upon which his candidateship at the Old Society depended. He was not successful; his previous training was alleged as the sufficient cause for his rejection, with the cry, "We have quite enough of these wood engravers. Look at Gilbert, he's always at it." But a few weeks afterwards he received a solatium in the shape of the acceptance of a drawing sent in by him to the Royal Academy of 1859, entitled, 'A Farm—Arundel Park in the Distance,' and the following year, 1860, saw him elected unanimously an Associate of the Water Colour Society upon the strength of three drawings, 'View on Holmwood Common,' 'Children Going to School,' and 'A View on the River Mole.' The Queen used to visit the Exhibition regularly during the lifetime of the Prince Consort, and on the first occasion on which she did so after this election, she expressed a wish to purchase one of the new Associate's drawings. Unfortunately it was already sold, and the owner would not part with it. Mr. Foster's elevation to the rank of a full member followed in two years, namely in 1862, the shortest time on record.

Sketch for a Water-Colour.

The year before his election to the Old Water-Colour Society, an event happened which brought him under the notice of the Art dealers, and through them, of the purchasers of water-colours. The drawings which some six years previously he had made to illustrate the Rhine volumes were sent to Foster's, in Pall Mall, for sale by auction. They had been executed when he was a comparative novice in the practice of water-colour painting, but they realised the considerable average for those days of a dozen guineas apiece,* but what was better, they attracted the attentions of Mr. Wallis of the French Gallery, and of other dealers. Mr. Wallis at once called upon him, and arriving just after the young artist's discomfiture at the hands of the Water-Colour Society, was at once informed of the fact. "Never mind," said he, "set to work directly, and paint me a big drawing which we will send into the Royal Academy." This was done, with the result, as before stated, of its being accepted and hung. Mr. Foster was at this time, and for some years previously had been, living at Carlton Hill East, St. John's Wood, near his father, but shortly after his election increasing notoriety led to such continuous interruptions to his work, often from mere busybodies, that he determined to find a retreat in the country.

The death of his father in January, 1861, yet further loosened his ties to the metropolis. Concerning this event a mistake arose which would have been ludicrous under less painful circumstances. The death was announced in the *Times*, and the *Athenæum* (the name of father and son being similar) mistook the former for the latter, and in its next issue published an obituary notice of a most eulogistic nature, testifying to the loss which Art

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* He received five pounds each for them, and individual specimens which have since again come under the hammer have sold for as much as a hundred and fifty guineas.

had suffered through the early death of this most promising artist. This was given wide publicity through being copied into other papers, and the family was inundated with letters of condolence and requests for biographical details of the artist's career. The artist still retains a sheaf of the most amusing of these.

A desire to be in the heart of his sketching ground, and an invitation from Mr. J. C. Hook, who was then residing there,

Rouen Cathedral. From a Water-Colour by Birket Foster.

led him down the South-Western line to Witley. In those days the cottages which now exist, fitted up with every necessity the artistic mind may demand, were not as plentiful thereabouts as the blackberries on the hedgerows, and the only one which presented itself as at all possible was a small one at Tigburn, at the foot of the hill upon which Mr. Foster now lives. It was inhabited by a poacher, whom the landlord much wanted to be quit of, with the rest of the family, including a bedridden old man, who was an almost insuperable difficulty. Bribes of all sorts, including the purchase of the garden stuff at a fabulous price, ultimately effected a clearance, and Mr. Foster entered into possession in the summer of 1861.

The cottage was so small and uncomfortable that he soon began looking about for a site whereon he could build a house for himself. In this he was aided by Mr. and Mrs. Hook, and they together scoured the country in search of one. As it happened, a chance walk one afternoon with his friends and fellow water-colour painters, Sir John Gilbert and Mr. J. W. Whymper, brought him to that which was finally determined upon, and which experience has shown could not have been bettered. The land happened to be for sale, but as building ground, and no more than three acres could be purchased. This Mr. Foster soon found was too small for his aspirations, and the building scheme not taking rapidly the owner was induced to sell the whole to Mr. Foster and Mr. Edmund Evans (who had married his niece), and the two now possess within their ring fence a compact estate of some score or more acres. Here the house, which will be presently described at greater length, was commenced, and 1863 saw its completion.

The years which have gone by since then have been passed in continuous activity and production, which has of course been influenced, and that for the better, by delightful natural and artistic surroundings. Given to hospitality, Mr. Foster's house has been a constant rendezvous for a large circle of friends, of which the greater part have naturally enough been selected from those of his own profession. Of some of these friendships we may be permitted to speak here without impropriety, for they concern beings whose lives may be said to have become national property.

Much of the short Art life of Frederick Walker was passed under Mr. Foster's roof. The merriest of fellows, he evidently

The Falls of the Tummel. From a Water-Colour by Birket Foster.

fascinated and enthralled all with whom he was brought into contact. His fragile tenement contained a spirit brimful of fun of the most original kind. Every corner of the house and every part of the place has memories of his presence and his work; the chimney-piece in one room recalls the picture in which Walker portrayed two girls at work, and many a precious hour was wasted because their merry pranks prevented his ever starting his day's work. On one particular occasion, when these two models had arrayed themselves in the chintzy brocades which he much affected, the whole day was lost and a hundred pounds or so as well, because just before commencing Walker lighted on a hornet in a half-dead condition, and he must needs spend several hours in vainly trying to resuscitate it. His doctrine was that he did not believe in work that was not done spontaneously and rapidly, and so he seldom worked except when he was in the humour, and then he got over it at a marvellous pace. His picture of 'The Well' was created here, and Mrs. Foster well remembers it, for he kept her and her step-daughter out in a pouring rain for over two hours while he sketched them in.

Birket Foster was introduced to Walker at a private view of the Academy. The ceremony had no sooner been performed than Freddy took him aside and, with the most serious face, said, "Tell me kindly what is the proper thing to do on being introduced to anybody? I was introduced just now to Harrison Weir. I put out my hand and he took off his hat. So I drew in my hand and took off my hat, whereupon he put on his hat and held out his hand." Walker's brother had died just previously, and he seemed so depressed that Mr. Foster asked him at once down to Witley. He came and stayed for

BIRKET FOSTER, PINXT.

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C. COUSEN, SCULPT.

PRIMROSE GATHERERS

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many weeks, and after that he never waited for an invitation—a ring at the bell was heard and he entered the house as if he were one of the family.

Many were the trips which these two artists made together; one of the earliest was to Knole, whither they went because Walker had been commissioned by Smith and Elder to illustrate "Esmond," and thought that the furniture there might inspire him. But it did not, and the work fell into the hands of Mr. Du Maurier, who carried it to a most successful end.

Another and more lengthy excursion was to Venice in 1868, when Mr. Orchardson formed one of the party. Walker, who was out of sorts, went round by sea, and, to his great consternation, was asked by the captain to conduct service on Sunday. How he got through it he did not know, but he described it as "frightfully impressive." Here, again, it was a case rather of play than work. Walker inaugurated what he termed "gondola combats," which consisted in the party going in two gondolas and splashing one another until they were wet through. Walker's work during this trip consisted of his beautiful picture of 'The Gondola,' a water-colour of a palace with Orchardson looking out of a window (this hangs in Mr. Foster's studio), and a drawing made out at the Lido, a favourite haunt of his, because, as he expressed it, it was "so Thamesy," and the little streams between the mud were "so lizardy." Mr. Foster has made many excursions to Italy before and since, but none were so enjoyable as this. His first was in 1866, when his passage to Venice was blocked by the Italian army warring against Austria. Several others (Mr. Foster thinks not less than seven) were made round about 1880 to execute a series of fifty Venetian drawings for the late Mr. Charles Seeley. For this commission he received the large sum of five thousand pounds, but the result has unfortunately never been seen by the public, as the owner has never allowed the drawings to be exhibited.

Venice. From a Water-Colour by Birket Foster.

But besides Italy, most of the most picturesque parts of Europe have been seen by him. One of his earliest trips was an ornithological one to the Shetland Isles, and hardly a year passed during the seventies and eighties but some part of France, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, or Germany was delineated by his pencil and brush.

Mr. Foster has received honours from many institutions; amongst them may be cited membership of the Royal Academy of Berlin, an honour which he received simultaneously with Mr. Alma Tadema, R.A.

It goes without saying that Mr. Foster's life has been a prolific one, so far as work in colour is concerned. The Old Water-Colour Society's catalogues testify to two hundred and eighty-three exhibits in the fifty-eight exhibitions which have been held between 1860 and 1890, and besides these many have gone into private hands. Of works in oil the record is a much smaller one. The Academy Exhibition index contains his name continuously between 1869 and 1877, in which period he showed fourteen pictures; but Mr. Foster soon found that practising in the two mediums was incompatible with success in both, and accordingly he has discontinued that of oil painting since the last named year. It would be well if many of his fellows would follow his example. It is of course very natural for an artist to yield to the temptation and attempt to obtain a mastery over the medium by which alone he can hope to attain to Academic honours. But the instances in which a successful water-colour painter has achieved distinction later in life in oil painting are so few that it is a most hazardous speculation, and in almost every instance only brings in its train mortification and disgust.

Our artist's method of working in colours has naturally, to a certain extent, been influenced by his long service in wood draughtsmanship. Here he combined the pencil with the brush, laying upon the wood in the first instance a wash of Chinese white, then putting in his clouds and distances with Indian ink, and his trees and foreground with a hard pencil. In colours, as the *Times* remarked when criticising an exhibition of his works held at Messrs. Vokins's in 1882, "he was practically the inventor of a style, which consisted at first of minute execution with the finest point, and with the use of body colour carried it to an extent which when he first practised it was quite new. But as this method obviously led him away from the qualities of breadth, rich tone of colour, and translucent effect of light, which belong to pure water-colour, he soon became sensible of it and gradually departed from the aim at excessive detail, and employed a broader touch and worked upon a larger scale. But he still maintains the principle of his style, and although enlarging it somewhat in the direction of obtaining greater breadth and general harmony, as in his latest works, he has never lost an atom of his individuality or swerved from his original view, however opposed it might be considered to be to what is called the legitimate in water-colour Art. It is this decided character that gives the greatest interest to Birket Foster's work. He began as an innovator, attempting an imitative style that, inasmuch as it dispensed

with the broad washes of water-colour, was out of the pale of orthodox practice, and now at last, he enlarges his style by learning from nature and developing his method, until he solves the problem by obtaining harmonious unity with the utmost diversity of detail on such really noble drawings as the 'Falls of the Tummel' (see page 16), and the 'Porch of Rouen Cathedral' (see page 15).

Mr. Foster's palette is a restricted and simple one, and he seldom uses new colours, as he finds it difficult to adapt himself to them. Specimens of his rough sketches from nature are given in this number. These he actually makes in small books, of which he has hundreds full of memoranda. He never uses an easel whilst sketching from nature, but works with his block held between his knees.

Much of Mr. Foster's work has been imitated in chromo-lithography—a good deal of it very indifferently, a little of it remarkably well. But most of the imitations have arisen from thoughtless admirers who have attempted to copy his

The Ford. From a Water-Colour by Birket Foster.

drawings for the mere love of the thing, and from pirates who have done it as a matter of trade. The specimens of these latter submitted to Mr. Foster became after a time so numerous, that he was driven to make a charge of a guinea before he would examine them; but this does not prevent constant application for the identification of drawings which in at least nine instances out of ten are miserable copies, not worth the cost of the postage spent upon them.

PART IV.—BIRKET FOSTER AND HIS CRITICS.

I DO not propose myself to enter upon a criticism of Mr. Foster's work, whether in black and white or in colours, save to defend it from one or two charges which have been brought against it by certain critics who have evidently viewed it with the most superficial glance. Mr. Foster has from the very commencement of his career been favoured, I might almost say pampered, by the Press. There is hardly an artist living who has been received with so many smiles and so few frowns, and the reason for this is probably, as the *Athenæum* puts it, that "whilst his genius is not vigorous or dramatic, it is so tender, delicate, and idyllic, that it is always congenial and attractive;" or, as the *Times* thirty years later states, that "his long and successful career as an artist holding a high and distinct position in our school of water-colour drawing," has been due to "a mastery of method and style entirely the artist's own, inspired with an enthusiastic feeling for the picturesqueness of English landscape."

The first charge brought against Mr. Foster's work, especially in black and white, is that it is characterized by repetition.

As to this I would ask such cavillers to consider the task which was laid upon the artist by the publishers, and then to compare the result with that of any other illustrator similarly situated. An artist naturally has certain predilections, and when the public not only accepts these, but demands that they shall be present in almost all that he does, it is not remarkable

if these recur. For instance, I asked Mr. Foster, seeing a quantity of firs in his garden, why he so seldom introduced them into his pictures, and whether he differed from Virgil, who sang "Fraxinus in sylvis pulcherrima, pinus in hortis." His reply was convincing. "A fir always reminds me of a Noah's ark tree, a stem in the middle, a pyramidal mass of foliage above with absolutely no variety. Now my favourite, 'the hedgerow elm,' as Milton calls it, has a magnificent bole, redolent of strength, and a superstructure which constantly varies, and is as picturesque when shorn of leaves as when covered with them."

From Poe's "Annabel Lee."

This penchant for certain forms over others is perhaps the secret of the charge just mentioned. Mr. Foster prefers the repose of nature to its stormier phases, and the stillness of noontide making itself felt beneath the trees and inducing repose, to a rough landscape drenched with rain or snow. For movement he relies upon his figures, and especially on flocks or cattle, the former attended by a favourite sheep dog, of which he must have obtained the prototype when he illustrated Cowper's "Task," wherein the woodman's companion is described as—

> "Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
> And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur."

So too the "gentle art" is more to his liking than the chase, and therefore we find his fields alive with nibbling flocks, his lanes with the slowly moving wain, his streams with the stolid angler, and his woods with Horace's pensive muser, who—

> "Libet jacere modo sub antiquâ ilice,
> Modo in tenaci gramine,
> Labunter altis interim ripis aquæ."

Although he sometimes paints the rushing torrent, as in 'The Tummel' (page 16), he much prefers the infant stream and—

> "Willows grey close crowding o'er the brook."

A second and still more unfounded complaint that has been urged against him is that the children introduced into his pictures, and which add so greatly to their charm, are too graceful and idyllic, and too daintily clothed for the rustics encountered in one's walks abroad. It is hardly necessary to answer the objections of those who prefer ugliness to beauty, and who would insist upon its retention rather than that truth should be sacrificed. If Mr. Foster has sinned in this respect he has done it in company with his friend Frederick Walker, with Mason, and other names which will for ever be included amongst the immortals of English landscape Art. Although a reason is hardly necessary, the artist adduces a very cogent one for his treatment of the subject, namely, that in the days of his youth it was considered correct to represent the labouring rustic as a chawbacon absolutely devoid of manliness, with turned-up nose, a long upper lip, and a vacuous expression; his children as sluts, and his surroundings as abject. Wandering amongst the Surrey lanes, Birket Foster saw none of this, but, on the contrary, his young imagination discovered beauty in everything. The labourer if not modelled on the heroic type was at all events a sturdy fellow, and as for his children, can any one who knows the country deny that he has seen, over and over again, instances of the graces which our artist introduces into his pictures? for instance, the bearing of the girl who balances herself upon the fallen elm in the picture on page 30, and who is not more beautiful than hundreds of other little lasses for whom we have to thank Mr. Foster. Leaving then

"Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's humble quietness."
White Doe of Rylstone.

the two, and I believe the only two objections which have been raised to Mr. Foster's work in black and white, we will

pass on to a more agreeable part of the subject, and glance at what we have to thank him for.

First of all, if he did not actually introduce, he was the artist to popularize the homes of the peasantry and life in the fields.

We in this generation have become so accustomed of late years to seeing the walls of exhibitions crowded with these subjects, that we are apt to overlook the fact that half a century ago artists had never condescended to such things; and if they noted the one phase of it represented by tumble-down buildings they did so because they were an echo of the classic ruin which had for so long furnished a *raison d'être* for a most unreal and uninteresting landscape. But as a body they had entirely overlooked the garden of nature, which cried out for notice, no man regarding it. He was almost the first to see beauty in the wayside cottage, with its tiled roof ridged with moss and houseleek, its timbered sides half hidden in vines, its apple-trees pushing their blossoms almost in at the leaden lattices; the first to put on paper the hedgerows decked out with honeysuckles and wild rose, and the woods gay with hyacinth and primroses.

Is it to be wondered at that as he stood at the gate of this paradise he saw his opportunity, and that when he entered in and recorded its loveliness the populace rose at him, accepted all he did, and refused to let him draw aught else than country-side, hamlet, winding lane, and wildflower pasture land? What more satisfying Art can the average Englishman require than that presented in the 'Primrose-gatherers' (on opposite page), where one is carried back to memories of days when all was youth, and spring, and sunshine, and no lowering clouds gave promise of the gloom that was in store in the hereafter?

And out of this portrayal of nature he evoked three qualities, which were not perhaps so rare at that time, but which are

Royal Cottage near the Trossachs.

getting day by day less common—daintiness, gentleness, and repose. Look at any one of the illustrations in this number and see if all three are not apparent. I take up the first illustrated work of to-day which presents itself (it happens to be a popular illustrated magazine, famed for the amount which is expended upon its illustrations), and I have not gone over half a dozen of its illustrations before I am conscious of a lack, almost an entire absence of this first quality of daintiness, a quality which appears to me to be a very necessary one. The editor is not, I imagine, to blame; it is the insidious taint of a malady which has recently attacked the Art training of every school, and for which we have to thank our Gallic neighbours, namely the delineation of everything which the eye sees, however revolting and unfitted it may be for reproduction, together with a supreme contempt of the principle of the selection of the fittest. The quality of gentleness, or gentility, is closely akin to this. When we look at the grossness of subject which pervaded every form of illustration at the commencement of the century, witness the woodcuts of Bewick even, a word of more than ordinary praise is due to an artist who has steered so clear of it as Birket Foster has done.

Yet one more notable characteristic must be felt in all his work, whether on wood or in water colour, and that is composition. With all artists of the old school he laments the degeneracy of to-day, which relegates that essential quality to the hindmost of seats, and he fails to see the merits of the photographic school, which places its nature on canvas exactly as it sees it. To him composition came almost naturally, but none the less he passed through a long course of study of it.

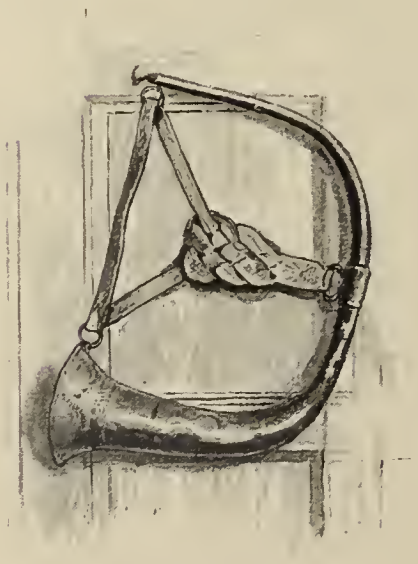
Before leaving the subject of Mr. Foster's work, another feature of it, which has to do with composition, must not be passed over without notice. I refer to his fondness for vignetting his

Primroses.

drawings, especially those of a small size. The origin of this peculiarity, for such it was in water-colours when he first practised it, is without doubt due to his having habituated himself to it in his work in black and white, where it had been utilized by Bewick, Harvey, and many others with more or less success. Only those who have attempted it know the difficulty of producing an entirely satisfactory result, where composition plays such a considerable part. Many artists have tried, but very few have succeeded, and none have ever approached Mr. Foster in the delicacy of his little dainties, which he produces with an ease, a variety, and a prolificness which is quite astounding. There is a large public which never tires of them, and nothing in water-colours commands a readier sale, whether it be in the exhibitions or under the hammer.

Buttercups.

PART V.—BIRKET FOSTER AT HOME.



The Foresters' or Fosters' horn.

THE South-Western line retains for a longer distance perhaps than any other its hideous metropolitan character. But when that portion of it which is termed the Direct Portsmouth line at length emerges into open country, it does its best to atone for its earlier shortcomings by presenting to the traveller a series of sylvan scenes as beautiful as any in the south of England, and these appear to greater advantage by reason of the uglinesses which have had to be borne before. The country betters some time before Godalming is reached, but it is after passing that picturesque town that West Surrey first dons its forest garb; then it is that above the sandy embankment, tipped with heather and bright with broom, one enjoys that always delightful sensation of peering down the dim arcades formed by innumerable pines, whose resiny odour penetrates even the stuffy railway compartment.

As the train deposits us at the little station of Witley, we find ourselves in a garden, and the scent of the pine wood is exchanged for that of the rose, hundreds of which, the product of a single root, line the platform from end to end. Traversing a short pathway, we arrive at a wicket gate, which opens into a wood, and we are on Mr. Foster's soil, and at the base of a steepish ascent, upon which stands his residence, "The Hill." The shelter of the wood is presently exchanged for that of an avenue of deftly woven filbert-trees, diverging paths from which open up vistas of a sundial gar-

den, a mass of roses, poppies, campanulas, corn and sunflowers, a lakelet white with water-lilies, and well-stocked strawberry beds.

A constant and rapid climb brings the visitor ultimately to a terrace, on one side of which stands the house, and on the other is unfolded a marvellous panorama. Over a rolling champaign, almost hidden by woods, is seen to the right Hindhead, the highest point in the prospect, its barren summit standing out a deep violet against the sunset sky. Somewhat to the left, but apparently not much lower, comes the spur which terminates in Blackdown, the topmost houses of Haslemere peeping over its crest, and on its flank the Poet Laureate's house, and Lythe Hill, where so many of Sir F. Leighton's best works are stored. Beyond the Weald—here called of Surrey, but for the most part of Sussex—can be discovered the spire of Petworth, recalling memories of Turner; and far off on the horizon the heights above Goodwood, and the range of the South Downs, broken midway by Arundel, and away to the east by Shoreham Gaps. That most assertive of South-Down beacons, Chanctonbury Ring, is of course visible.

Whilst any delineation in black and white of the scene would fail as entirely as words to convey a sense of its beauties, this is fortunately not the case with the more immediate object of our visit, namely, the artist's dwelling. Mr. William Foster has given us at page 25 a very artistic rendering of his father's house, which conveys everything except the colour with which it is decked by the flowers which depend from the windows and bloom over its sides and roof.

Leaving a game at bowls in which he had been successfully combating against his son and a young student of the Royal Academy (who is supposed to be hard at work painting an old graveyard hard by, the competitive subject for the Turner Gold Medal), our host hastens up the lawn to greet us. Tall and erect, no one would credit that he is over sixty years of age, whilst his open countenance and hearty welcome quite belie the somewhat stern appearance in which his portraits always clothe him, and which is present even when the photographer is, as in the case of the one taken for us (page 1), a member of his family, and the locale is his own garden. One is at once assured of a welcome to Witley, and having long heard of the artistic treasures which "The Hill" contains, but a few moments elapse before a movement is irresistibly made towards the house, and one's back is turned upon the delights of the garden.

As Mr. Foster hastens to tell us, in a somewhat depreciatory tone of voice, and as if to reconcile one to shortcomings, he has practically been his own architect. There is little need for him to mention this, for the house and its contents testify to that best of all qualities, when the designer is an artist, individuality.

Passing at once into the drawing-room, the windows of which are seen in the illustration, at either side of the angle nearest to us, we are conscious at a glance of the presence, in their best attire, of the sister arts of painting in water-colours and music. Not only in duty bound, but with a sense of delight, we at once make our way across the room to worship at the shrine of the great master of water-colour art, and revel over a group of Turners, for the most part of the grey paper kind,

The Front Door of "The Hill."

which form a wonderful bouquet of colour, as full and rich as on the day on which the artist stayed his hand upon them. The names of the Rhine, Switzerland, the Moselle, and Sidon, will convey to those who are familiar with Turner's work an idea of the pleasurable anticipations which the thought of a prospective quiet study of these induces. This furnishing of the choicest meat at the outset has, as we know, been regarded from very early times as a rather perilous proceeding, and no greater proof of the high character of the remainder of the feast could be furnished than this, that subsequent dishes did not suffer by comparison. We are sensible of this as we pass round the room, and Mr. Foster

points out the examples of the work of his friends, John Lewis, Linnell, William Hunt, Frederick Walker, Pinwell, Frederick Tayler, and W. L. Leitch, all seen to the best advantage in selected specimens, hung upon a ground of roughened gold. The only indications in the room of Mr. Foster's work are two small drawings which, enclosed in a *passepartout*, find a place upon his wife's work-table. The musical bent of the family is evidenced by a novel decoration of the glazing of the upper part of the windows, suggested by Charles Keene, whereon scores of quaint rounds, catches, and carols are imaged, and oftentimes are made actual use of.

Tiles from the Sleeping Beauty Series. By Burne-Jones.

He who is endued with a liking for blue and white china (and who is not nowadays?) will find it hard to keep his hands off many of the specimens which decorate not only the chimney-breast, but the frieze round the room. Mr. Foster was very early in the field in quest of this, the best of decorative material. In company with Rossetti and a few others he recognised its value long before the rest of mankind. As evidence of its price at that time, he shows a ginger jar for which, at Rossetti's instance, he was induced to give what he considered the enormous price of £16, and for which he has since refused several hundreds. But the ware was then to be had in abundance. As Rossetti said, Murray Marks' shop in New Oxford Street was like a scene in the Arabian Nights, so full was it of enormous jars. He might now almost apply the term to any room at "The Hill," for so replete is the house that every bedroom is decked with it, and one not only washes, but drinks one's soup out of it.

To Rossetti, in a way, is also due the decoration of the dining-room. Mr. Foster, whilst the house was in course of building, had been brought a good deal into connection with William Morris, who had some time previously started a sort of co-operative shop in Queen Square, where a number of young full-blooded artists were working off their superfluous energies in all sorts of decorative ventures. William Morris came down to "The Hill," and mapped out a wonderful scheme for the decoration of the house. Much of it did not get beyond this stage, but some of it fortunately was carried out to its accomplishment. Mr. Burne-Jones also came, and Mr. Foster asked him to do something towards the decoration. Burne-Jones said that Rossetti had just completed a version of St. George and the Dragon in stained glass for Morris, and suggested that the adornment of the dining-room should consist of a portrayal of the same legend. Accordingly Mr. Jones painted seven canvases, which form a continuous band round three sides of the room. These, apart from their excellence, form a most interesting record of the work of the painter in the early years of the sixties. We give a reproduction of the fifth panel (see page 26), not

View from the Verandah.

"The Hill," Witley, South Front.

because it is more characteristic than the others, but because it lent itself best to photography.

Other examples either of Mr. Burne-Jones's brush or from his designs are to be found in every room of the house. The lights upon the stairs are full of stained glass, and include a series, very fine in colour, illustrative of the Seasons. On pages 28 and 31 will be found two examples of Mr. Burne-Jones's work in this branch of Art. The fireplaces in the bedrooms have tiles not only on the hearth-sides but on the chimney-breasts upon which various fairy stories are told in many a scene, 'Beauty and the Beast,' 'Cinderella,' 'The Sleeping Beauty,' and others. Our illustration (p. 24) from the last named will be of interest just now, when the artist has carried out the subject with such a wealth of imaginative detail; it is noteworthy that he has kept to his early idea as regards the Prince encountering the bodies of those earlier aspirants who had succumbed to the magic spell. But one of the most remarkable examples of Mr. Jones's work is the great screen which ornaments Mr. Foster's studio, and of which we give one of the eight folds (p. 29). Hereon is portrayed in marvellous detail sixteen events in the life of St. Frideswide, a record of whose good works it was meet and right that a graduate of the University of Oxford should assist in handing down to posterity. Photography and engraving both fail to translate the wonderful wealth of colour which flushes across the studio when this screen is unfolded. It was upon calling on Mr. Burne-Jones at his house in Great Russell Street, to acquaint him of his election to the Water-Colour Society, that Mr. Foster first saw the screen, and wanted to purchase it, but it was not until some time after, upon Mr. Jones's moving from Kensington Square, that he consented to hand it over to his brother artist's safe keeping.

St. George and the Dragon. From the Dining-room.

"The Hill" contains two studios, a large one which since Mr. Foster has discarded oil painting he seldom uses, and a smaller room in which most of his water-colours are produced. We give an illustration (p. 27) of the first named, which is distinguished by an arched roof, and at either end has two unfinished frescoes by J. D. Watson, 'The Feast of the Peacock,' and 'The Raising of the Maypole,' both of which testify to the well-known ability of Mr. Foster's brother-in-law. It was in this studio that the plays which took place here during so many years at Christmas, and which attracted a considerable notoriety, were performed. The master of the ceremonies was Robert Dudley, and the plays which were acted under his direction left little to be desired. The scenery was painted for the most part by Fred. Walker, who delighted in the contrasts which he introduced. A library in which everything was artistic, and in which the portraits on the walls were painted with as much care as if they had had to satisfy the originals, would be succeeded by an apartment which was a growth of everything that was vulgar, from the wall paper to the wax fruits. Birket Foster painted for the drop-scene a view of Venice, and when a curtain was for convenience substituted, a well-known dealer purchased it for a considerable sum, and it now adorns a nobleman's staircase. The *mise en scène* was most elaborate, and the dresses and make-up of the actors were admirable. Frederick Walker painted his face so as to be quite unrecognisable, making it quite a work of Art.

The smaller studio has little or no pretensions to distinction; it is surrounded by cases in which are stored the multitudinous studies which have of necessity accumulated during thirty years'

work. Sketch-books without end exhibit the artist's industry. Of properties there are none, unless a splendid brass-bound chest of Spanish mahogany, a relic it is said of the Spanish Armada, may be classified as such. The view from the large and low window is an uncommon one. A high bank, a sufficient distance away, allows free entry to the light, but gives complete privacy to the apartment. All the vegetation within and around it is allowed to run wild, and the artist has without moving his chair a mass of useful material at hand in the shape of ferns, gorse, and bramble.

Many other rooms in the house would furnish interesting details, but space permits our mentioning only one other, and that is the library. Mr. Foster has not only a voracious appetite for pictures but is a bibliomaniac as well, and whilst well-fitted bookshelves afford the visitor an ample pabulum of light reading, one special case offers an opportunity which is seldom met with of conning over the mysteries of first folios and quartos of Shakespeare, Caxtons, and works of the early printers. But the volume which the illustrator of Milton sets most store by is an edition of the Lycophron, which has had

Mr. Foster's Large Studio.

the privilege of forming part of the great poet's library and bears in his handwriting not only the legend, "Sum ex libris Jo Miltoni, 1634," but annotations in Greek and Latin at frequent intervals upon its pages. After these even Mr. Foster would not contend that the shelves allotted to first editions of the books which he has illustrated appear of higher importance. But there is plenty else to occupy the attention, including scrap-books full of sketches and caricatures by Fred. Walker, Charles Keene, J. D. Watson, and Orchardson. Nor will the visitor leave the room without an inspection of the charming portrait of our hostess, from the brush of Mr. Orchardson, which is let into the over-mantel.

Mr. Foster married, in 1850, Ann, daughter of Mr. Robert Spence, and by her had five children. His eldest son, Myles Birket, has followed the profession of music, and as organist of the Foundling Hospital and the author of many services holds high rank amongst his fellows. His second son, William, is well known as a water-colour artist and illustrator,

especially of children's books, in which he has displayed a considerable fund of humour. All our illustrations of Mr. Foster's house are from his brush. He is also an ornithologist of no mean order, the woods at Witley affording him ample scope for work and observation. To effect this latter end he has established himself as the friend of the feathered tribes, for he provides them with an infinity of boxes in which to nest and rear their progeny, an advantage of which they are not slow to avail themselves.

Mrs. Foster died in 1859, and in 1864, our artist married his present wife, who was the daughter of Mr. Dawson Watson, of Sedburgh, and a sister of Mr. J. D. Watson, also a member of the Society of Painters in Water Colours.

Mr. Foster will not allow us to leave without a tour round his village, of which he is very proud. The Corporation of London in building a hideous charity school, and one or two other owners of property in failing to discharge their duty in preserving picturesque cottages, have spoilt one or two corners of it; but Witley has still a good title to rank as one of the most picturesque hamlets in England, and were old Anthony Smith (whose memory is to last in his native village as long as its church bells give forth a sound) to issue from the vault which he tenants, and wander round, he would find many a house but little different to what it was when as "Pentioner to King Charles ye 1st," he and his dame and family wended their way each Sunday to occupy the squire's pew.

Thanks to Birket Foster, who is at work at the present time in putting on to copper a series entitled 'Memorials of an Old Village,' to Mrs. Allingham and scores of other artists, the beauties of Witley cottages may be perpetuated on paper even after the tenements themselves have passed away. So too Mr. Foster's drawings will hand down to posterity the dress and habits of a race of peasants which has altogether changed, and not for the better. The children of a quarter of a century ago were almost of the Gainsborough type, in their clean flowered prints and white pinafores and sun bonnets; they have given place to smart little wenches decked out in the latest fashions of the day; the picturesque smock-frocks are fast disappearing, and are now replaced by respectable broadcloth from the ready-made shop at Godalming. But one or two ancients remain to testify to what the rude forefathers of the hamlet were like before the railway came and swept away the past. The White Hart, the signboard whereof by the way is the combined work of Birket Foster and A. W. Cooper, son of an old Academician of that name, is still a model public-house, and as such is appreciated by all artists.

The view from every point of vantage in the village is interesting; especially is it so from Banacle Hill, wherefrom not only the panorama seen from Mr. Foster's house unfolds itself, but a stretch of interesting country lying to the north, including Crookesbury Hill, at the foot of which is Waverley Abbey, which gave its name to Scott's novel, and the little cottage the home of Swift and Stella. Amongst more modern celebrities connected with art or letters who have lived nearer home, and actually within the precincts of Witley, are George Eliot, Mr. Hook, Sir Henry Cole, and Mrs. Allingham.

Stained Glass. From a Design by Mr. Burne-Jones, A.R.A.

LIST OF BOOKS ILLUSTRATED BY BIRKET FOSTER.

This list does not include editions subsequent to the first, or any books of which the illustrations were not specially made by the artist.

1841. 'Ireland, its Scenery, Character, &c.,' by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall. How and Parsons.

'Aldershot and all about it.'

'Birds, Trees, and Blossoms.'

1845. 'Richmond and other Poems,' by C. Ellis. 3 illustrations by Birket Foster. Madden and Malcolm.

1847. 'The Boy's Spring Book,' by Thos. Miller. 35 illustrations by Birket Foster. Chapman and Hall.

'The Boy's Summer Book,' by Thos. Miller. Chapman and Hall.

'The Boy's Autumn Book,' by Thos. Miller. Chapman and Hall.

'The Boy's Winter Book,' by Thos. Miller. Chapman and Hall.

1848. 'The Female Worker to the Poor.' 3 illustrations by Birket Foster. Seeleys.

1849. 'The River Thames,' by J. F. Murray.

1850. 'The Pilgrims of the Rhine,' by Sir E. B. Lytton. 1 illustration by Birket Foster. Chapman and Hall.

'Evangeline: a Tale of Acadie,' by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Engravings after Birket Foster. Bogue.

'The Year Book of the Country; or the Field, the Forest, and the Fireside,' by W. Howitt. Colburn.

'Original Poems for my Children,' by Thos. Miller. All illustrations by Birket Foster. Bogue.

1851. 'Christmas with the Poets.' 52 tinted illustrations by Birket Foster. Bogue.

'The Moorland Cottage.' By the Author of Mary Barton.

'The Illustrated Book of Songs for Children.' W. Orr & Co.

1851. 'Voices of the Night,' by H. W. Longfellow. Bogue.

'The Poetical Works of Oliver Goldsmith.'

Fold of a Screen, by Mr. Burne-Jones, A.R.A., illustrating the life of St. Frideswide.

1852. 'Longfellow's Poetical Works.' 81 illustrations by Birket Foster. Bogue.

'The Story of Mont Blanc,' by Albert Smith. Bogue.

1852. 'A Month at Constantinople,' by Albert Smith. Bogue.

1853. 'Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio.' 8 illustrations by Birket Foster. Ingram, Cooke & Co.

'Poetry of the Year.' 1 in water-colour by Birket Foster. G. Bell.

'The Lady of the Lake,' by Sir Walter Scott. A. & C. Black, Edinburgh.

'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' by Sir Walter Scott. 100 illustrations by Birket Foster and John Gilbert. A. and C. Black, Edinburgh.

1853. 'A Holiday Book for Christmas and the New Year. Ingram Cooke & Co.

'A Picturesque Guide to the Trossachs.' All by Birket Foster. Black.

1854. 'Proverbial Philosophy,' by Martin Tupper. 6 illustrations by Birket Foster. Hatchards.

'The Blue Ribbon: a Story of the Last Century,' by Anna Harriet Drury. King and Son.

'An Elegy written in a Country Churchyard,' by Thomas Gray. 13 illustrations by Birket Foster. Joseph Cundall.

Playtime. From a Water-colour by Birket Foster.

1854. 'Little Ferns for Fanny's little Friends.' 8 illustrations by Birket Foster. Nathaniel Cooke & Co.

'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,' by John Milton. 30 etchings on steel by Birket Foster. Bogue.

'The Golden Legend,' by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. 35 illustrations by Birket Foster. Bogue.

1855. 'Marmion,' by Sir Walter Scott. 80 engravings by Birket Foster and John Gilbert. Black, Edinburgh.

'The Dairyman's Daughter.' Seeley.

1856. 'Sabbath Bells chimed by the Poets.' In colours. All illustrations by Birket Foster. Bell and Daldy.

1856. 'The Task,' by William Cowper. Illustrated by Birket Foster. Nisbet & Co.

The Rhine and its Picturesque Scenery,' described by Henry Mayhew. 20 illustrations on steel after Birket Foster. London. Bogue.

'The Traveller,' by Oliver Goldsmith. With 30 etchings on steel by Birket Foster. Bogue.

'Mia and Charlie.' Bogue.

'The Poetical Works of George Herbert.' Nisbet.

'Sacred Allegories,' by the Rev. W. Adams. 7 illustrations by Birket Foster. Rivington.

1857. 'The Sabbath,' 'Sabbath Walks,' and other Poems by

James Grahame. Illustrations by Birket Foster. Nisbet & Co.

Stained Glass. From a Design by Mr. Burne-Jones, A R.A.

1857. 'The Poets of the Nineteenth Century.' Selected and edited by the Rev. R. A. Willmott. 15 illustrations by Birket Foster. Routledge.

'Ministering Children.' 8 illustrations by Birket Foster. Seeley Jackson.

'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. 2 illustrations by Birket Foster. Sampson Low & Co.

'Rhimes and Roundelays in Praise of a Country Life.' Bogue.

'The Course of Time,' by R. Pollok. 27 illustrations by Birket Foster. Blackwood.

'Dramatic Scenes and New Poems,' by Barry Cornwall. 14 illustrations by Birket Foster. Chapman.

'The Lord of the Isles.' Adam and C. Black.

'The Farmer's Boy,' by Robert Bloomfield. 18 illustrations by Birket Foster. Low & Co.

'The Upper Rhine: the Scenery of its Banks and the Manners of its People,' described by Henry Mayhew. Routledge & Co.

1858. 'Poems of William Bryant.' 34 illustrations by Birket Foster. R. Griffin, Low & Co.

'The Poetical Works of Edgar Allen Poe.' 17 illustrations by Birket Foster. Sampson Low & Co.

1858. 'Comus,' by John Milton. Routledge.

'The Prince of Peace; or, Lays of Bethlehem.' Seeley & Co.

. . . . . " Flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice."
From Cowper's "Task."

1858. 'The Home Affections portrayed by the Poets,' selected and edited by Charles Mackay. 20 illustrations by Birket Foster. Routledge.

'Kavanagh: a Tale,' by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. 38 illustrations by Birket Foster. Kent & Co.

'Poetry and Pictures from Thomas Moore.' 20 illustrations by Birket Foster. Longmans.

'The Shipwreck,' by Robert Falconer.

'The Grave,' by Robert Blair. 10 illustrations by Birket Foster. A. and C. Black.

'Lays of the Holy Land; from Ancient and Modern Poets.' 15 illustrations by Birket Foster. Nisbet.

Venice. From a Water-colour by Birket Foster.

1859. 'The Seasons,' by James Thomson. 21 illustrations by Birket Foster. Nisbet & Co.

1859. 'The Merrie Days of England,' by Ed. McDermott. 4 illustrations by Birket Foster. Kent & Co.

'Poems and Songs,' by Robert Burns. 18 illustrations by Birket Foster. Bell and Daldy.

'Poems by William Wordsworth,' edited by Robert Aris Willmott. 70 illustrations by Birket Foster. Routledge.

'The Hamlet,' by Thomas Warton. 14 etchings on steel by Birket Foster. Sampson Low.

'The Poetical Works of Thomas Gray.' Sampson Low.

'Favourite English Poems. Illustrations by Birket Foster. Sampson Low & Co.

'The Poems of Oliver Goldsmith,' edited by Robert Aris Willmott. Routledge.

'The Deserted Cottage,' by William Wordsworth. Routledge.

'The White Doe of Rylstone,' by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. 30 illustrations by Birket Foster. Longmans.

1860. 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,' by Lord Byron. John Murray.

'The Tempest,' by William Shakespeare. 5 illustrations by Birket Foster. Bell and Daldy.

1860. 'The Merchant of Venice,' by William Shakespeare. 5 illustrations by Birket Foster. Sampson Low.

'The Poets of the West.' Sampson Low.

'Common Wayside Flowers,' by Thomas Miller. In colours. Routledge.

'Poems by James Montgomery.' 39 illustrations by Birket Foster. Routledge.

'A Book of Favourite Modern Ballads.' Illustrated by modern English artists. 11 illustrations by Birket Foster. W. Kent & Co., late Bogue.

'Lallah Rookh,' by Thomas Moore. 5 illustrations by Birket Foster. Routledge.

'Songs for my Little Ones at Home.' In colours. Sampson Low.

1862. 'The Scottish Reformation,' by Peter Lorimer, D. D. 25 illustrations by Birket Foster. R. Griffin.

1863. 'Odes and Sonnets.' All illustrations in colour by Birket Foster. Routledge.

1867. 'Summer Scenes,' by Birket Foster. A series of photographs from some of his choicest water-colours. Bell and Daldy.

1873. 'The Trial of Sir Jasper,' by S. C. Hall. 1 illustration by Birket Foster. Virtue.

From Graham's "Sabbath."

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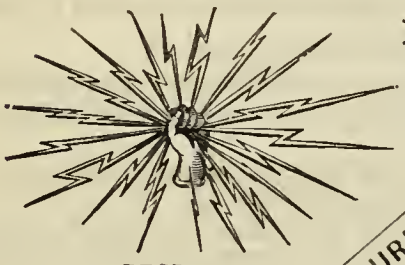

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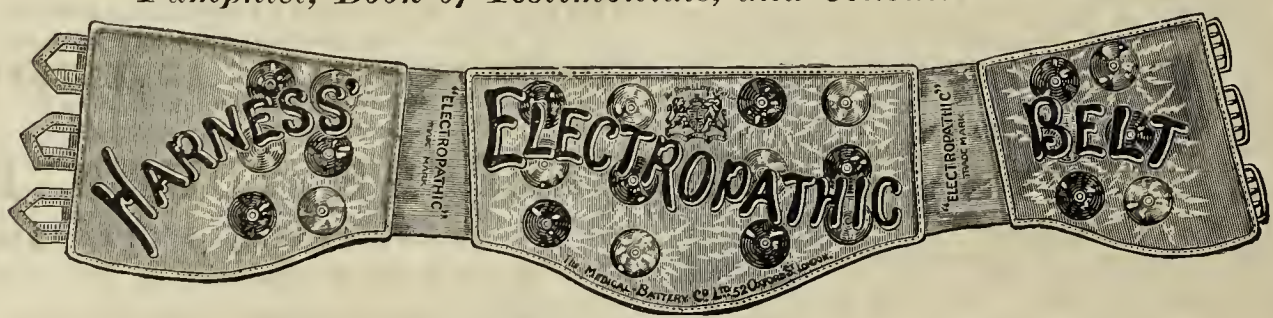

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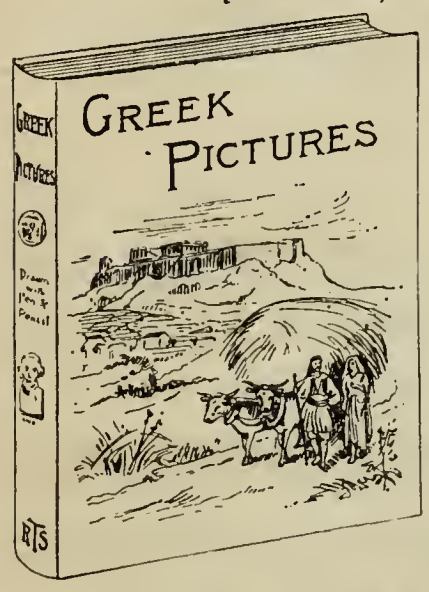

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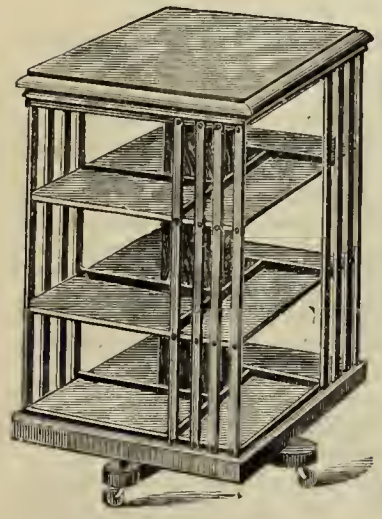

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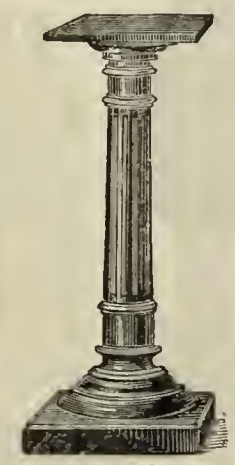

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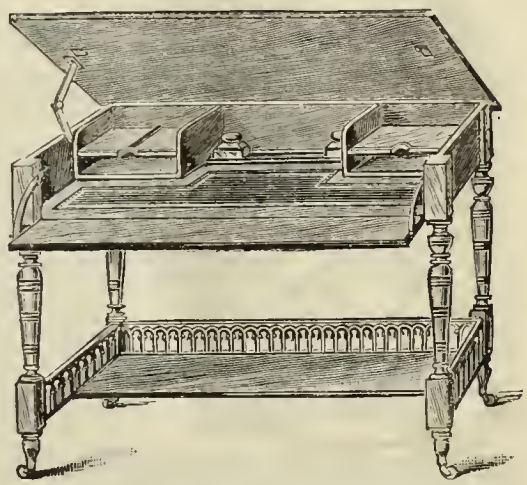

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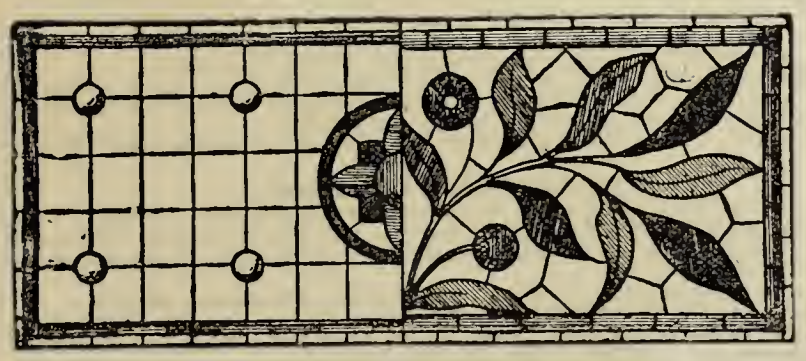

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